

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION,  
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, AND  
THE US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS WILL CONDUCT A LOCATION/DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING  
FOR MD 198 FROM MD 295 TO MD 32 IN ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY**

**Thursday, November 17, 2011**

**Meade Middle School  
1103 26<sup>th</sup> Street, Fort Meade, MD 20755  
6:00 PM – Displays  
7:00 PM – Presentation/Testimony**

The project consists of improving existing capacity and traffic operations along MD 198 to enhance access to the Fort George G. Meade Military Reservation (Fort Meade) and increase vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety along this corridor, while supporting existing and planned development in the area. MD 198 provides direct access to Fort Meade from MD 32, MD 295, and points south and west of the study area.

The study proposes widening MD 198 to two lanes in both directions (eastbound and westbound), divided by a grassy median that varies throughout the corridor from 6 feet to 20 feet in width. On-road bicycle facilities would be provided in both directions adjacent to the outside travel lane. A five-foot-wide sidewalk and an eight-foot-wide shared-use path would be provided throughout the corridor, where appropriate. From the northbound on/off ramps for the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (Parkway), to the second access point of Arundel Gateway, this alternative proposes a 12-foot-wide eastbound auxiliary lane to accommodate projected traffic due to planned development. Based on reports of flooding, Alternative 4 Modified proposes to raise the elevation and extend the length of the bridge over the Little Patuxent River.

The purpose of this Hearing is to provide all interested persons the opportunity to comment on the project's location, general design, and associated social, economic, cultural, and natural environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives before an alternative is selected.

Beginning at 6:00 pm, the project alternatives and other information will be on display. Public hearing displays will be available on the SHA website at <http://www.roads.maryland.gov>. Click on Projects & Studies, SHA Projects Page, and Anne Arundel County, then MD 198, Laurel Fort Meade Road under Preconstruction. Representatives of the State Highway Administration (SHA), Anne Arundel County, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Fort Meade, and the US Army Corps of Engineers - Baltimore District (Corps) will be available to discuss the project and record comments.

A formal presentation beginning at 7:00 pm and lasting approximately 20 minutes will include a description of the project alternatives, a summary of environmental impacts, information on right-of-way acquisition and relocation assistance procedures, and an explanation of Title VI of the Equal Opportunity Program. The presentation will be followed by public testimony.

Depending on the build alternative and interchange option, stream and wetland impacts would range from 164-711 linear feet and 1.6 – 4 acres, respectively. SHA, in consultation with the Corps, has identified Waters of the United States (US), including jurisdictional wetlands, which are regulated by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. This public hearing provides the opportunity to present views, opinions, and information which will be considered by the Corps in evaluating a Department of the Army permit for impacts on wetlands and Waters of the US. All comments will become part of the formal project record. Copies of written statements expressing concern for aquatic resources may be submitted to Mary Frazier, US Army Corps of Engineers, Attn: CENAB-OP-RMN P.O. Box 1715, Baltimore, MD 21203-1715; or emailed to [Mary.A.Frazier@usace.army.mil](mailto:Mary.A.Frazier@usace.army.mil) until **December 19, 2011**.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) may serve as the application for a Corps permit pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344). Coordination with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) also ensures that the document includes alternatives analysis for the state's wetland permit review. Application of the state permit will be made after the alternative selection process is completed.

The decision to issue the Section 404 permit will be based on the evaluation of the probable impacts of the proposed project on the public interest, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. This decision will reflect the national concern for the protection and use of important resources. The benefits that may reasonably be expected to accrue from the proposed project must be balanced against the reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors that may be relevant to the proposed project will be considered, including cumulative effects. Among these factors are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, cultural values, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplains values, land use, navigational concerns, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, considerations of property ownership, and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The evaluation that the work described above will have on the public interest will include an application of the Clean Water Act Section 404(b) (1) promulgated by the Administrator, US Environmental Protection Agency, under authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Native American Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of the proposed activity. The Corps will consider the comments when determining whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, the Corps takes into account public hearing comments regarding the assessment of impacts on endangered species, historic property, and other public-interest factors listed above.

The SHA is required to obtain water quality certification for the project from MDE in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Any written comments concerning the work described above which would relate to water quality certification should be sent to Mr. Steve Hurt, Maryland Department of the Environment, Wetlands and Waterways Program, 1800 Washington Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21203.

The preliminary review of the application indicates that the proposed work will have no effect on federally listed species or their critical habitat pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended. As the evaluation continues, additional information may become available that could modify this preliminary determination.

The SHA, in consultation with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and other interested parties, has identified two historic properties in the area of potential effects that are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. These resources, identified in the EA prepared for the project, are the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and the D.C. Children's Center - Forest Haven District. The MHT has concurred with SHA's determination that the project will have no adverse effect on either resource. Consistent with the Section 106 procedures of the National Historic Preservation Act, public comments are requested regarding effects on historic properties. For additional information on SHA's effect determination, contact the Environmental Manager.

Alternatives 2 and 4 Modified will have minor impacts on a publicly owned public recreation area - the Patuxent Research Refuge ball fields parking lot. SHA will request that the FHWA make a Section 4(f) de minimis (minor impact) determination that the proposed action, which maintains the same number of parking spaces but reconfigures and resurfaces the parking lot, does not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes of the ball fields. SHA requests public comment on this determination.

The Parkway, which is owned by the National Park Service, is the only other publicly owned public park in the study area. Permanent impacts on the Parkway from ramp improvements range from 3.6 – 6 acres under Alternatives 2 or 4 Modified. Options to avoid or minimize park impacts have been developed in accordance with the Section 4(f) regulations found at 23 CFR 774. The extent of park impacts was minimized by using narrow shoulder and travel lanes, shifting storm water management facilities outside the park boundary, and adding native plants for screening. This Hearing and the circulation of the Section 4(f) Evaluation as part of the EA will allow FHWA to obtain public comments on the avoidance and minimization options and impacts.

Individuals and representatives of organizations may submit a request to testify at the Hearing by writing to Ms. Kameel Hall, Project Manager, Project Management Division, Maryland State Highway Administration, 707 N. Calvert Street, MS C-301, Baltimore, MD 21202; calling 410-545-8542 or toll-free 1-800-548-5026; or emailing [KHall1@sha.state.md.us](mailto:KHall1@sha.state.md.us) no later than five days before the hearing (November 12, 2011). Attendees may sign the Speakers List at the registration desk on the date of the Hearing. Submit written statements and other exhibits for inclusion in the Public Hearing transcript to the Project Manager at the address listed above until December 19, 2011.

Elected officials will be given the opportunity to speak first. Persons on the Speakers List will be called to testify in the order in which their requests were received, and those who did not pre-register will be invited to speak before oral testimony concludes. SHA may set a time limit for each speaker if a large number register to testify. Private and written testimony will also be accepted.

If you received a copy of this notice in the mail you are included on the project mailing list and will receive information about project developments and opportunities for public involvement as the study progresses. Persons not on the mailing list may add their contact information by phoning, writing, or emailing the Project Manager. Brochures and comment forms will be available at the Hearing.

Beginning on **October 18, 2011**, the EA describing the project will be available for inspection and copying during normal business hours at the following locations:

US Army Corps of Engineers  
Regulatory Branch, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
10 S. Howard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201  
(410) 962-4252

Anne Arundel County Public Library  
Maryland City at Russett Library  
3501 Russett Green, Laurel, MD 20742-1810  
(301) 725-2390  
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 1:00 PM – 9:00 PM  
Friday, 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM  
Wednesday and Saturday, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Anne Arundel County Government  
Planning and Zoning Office, Heritage Office Complex 2664  
Riva Road, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Annapolis, MD 21401  
(410) 222-7450, 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM, Monday-Friday

State Highway Administration  
District 5 Office  
138 Defense Highway, Annapolis, MD 21401  
(410) 841-1000 or (800) 331-5603

State Highway Administration  
District 5 Glen Burnie Shop  
910 Stewart Avenue, Glen Burnie, MD 21061  
(410) 766-3770, (410) 766-3779, or (410) 766-3757

State Highway Administration  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 707 N. Calvert Street, Mailstop C-301,  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
(410) 545-8522 or (800) 548-5026

#### REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

The Maryland Relay Service can assist teletype users at 711. Persons requiring special assistance to participate should contact the Project Manager. Whenever possible, SHA will provide an interpreter for persons with hearing/speech disabilities or who need assistance with the English language. To request special assistance or an interpreter, please contact the Project Manager **no later November 10, 2011**.

For more information on this and other SHA projects, visit <http://www.roads.maryland.gov> and click on Projects & Studies, SHA Projects Page, and Anne Arundel County.

October 17, 2011  
A-605

Darrell B. Mobley  
Acting State Highway Administrator